



September 22, 2026

To My Fellow National Capital Presbytery Members and Friends,

Grace and peace in Jesus' name! I am honored and humbled to write to you as your (soon-to-be) new NCP Moderator. Huge kudos to the outgoing Moderator, Elder Jesy Littlejohn, who has ministered to this presbytery with thoughtfulness and faithfulness. And I'm excited to share this responsibility with incoming Vice-Moderator Marco Grimaldo.

This year, I hope to get to know many of your congregations and bring your stories to the wider presbytery. I had the privilege already to be a part of the Light to the Nations gathering this summer, and there are quite a few installation and ordination services upcoming. I will be praying for each congregation and organization and specialized minister, so please don't hesitate to let me know how I can lift you up in prayer! My cell is 202.644.3447, email RLV@capitolhillpreschurch.org. We live in challenging times, but I always like to say, "You've got this, and God's got you." With joy, love, and freedom, may we serve the Kingdom of Love together.

Peace,

Rev. Rachel Vaagenes
Moderator-Elect
National Capital Presbytery



**National Capital Presbytery
Agenda of the Fall Stated Meeting
Tuesday, September 22, 2026 | 5:00 PM**

*Elder Jesy Littlejohn, Moderator
Rev. Alex Evangelista, Stated Clerk*

Hosted by National Capital Presbytery
at National Presbyterian Church
4101 Nebraska Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016

Pre-Meeting Activities

Advent Preacher Workshop | 12-3 PM with Lunch in the Garden Rooms

New Commissioner Training | 3:30 PM in the Chapel

General Assembly Commissioner Learnings in Reflection | 3:30 PM in the Garden Rooms

Call to Order and Opening Prayer | Moderator, Elder Jesy Littlejohn

Seating of Corresponding Members

Declaration of Quorum

Stated Clerk's Report

Omnibus Motion:

- The Minutes of the May Stated Meeting of the Presbytery on May 19, 2026 (page 20);
- The proposed docket for the meeting;
- The enrollment of ministers of the Word and Sacrament from other presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other denominations as corresponding members;
- Approval of the Appointments found in the Nominating Committee Report;
- Approval of a two-part motion from Leadership Council, which amends a single section in the *Manual of Administrative Operations*, found in the Leadership Council Report as Motion #2 (page 9). Motion 2B is not proposed for the Manual text.

Reports of Commissions (G-3.0109b) and other groups

The following are found in the *Presbytery Reports* Packet:

- Report from the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property
- Report from the Committee/Commission on Ministry
- June 03, 2026, Leadership Council Minutes
- National Capital Presbytery Statement of Financial Position Summary, July 31, 2026
- Report from the Bills and Overtures Committee

Introduction of New Minister Members in the Presbytery – (page 2 of Presbytery Reports)

Rev. Dr. Janel Dixon

Rev. Dr. Aram Feinberg

Rev. Diane Maloney

Action Item #1 – Leadership Council: Garden Memorial Church

The Leadership Council report is found in the attached reports section for this presbytery meeting agenda. Their report also includes background, rationale, and additional supportive documentation for this first action item (page 8).

Motion: Leadership Council recommends that the Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church property, located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue SE, Washington, DC be sold. Proceeds of the sale be used to reimburse costs associated with carrying this property and any remaining monies be added to the Property Management Fund to assist the presbytery in future property endeavors. It is further recommended that: the buyer be selected and terms negotiated by Leadership Council (or their designee) and reported back to the Presbytery; and that the NCP Treasurer be authorized to sign all documents related to the transaction on behalf of the Presbytery as an officer of the corporation.

Rationale: Given the carrying costs (taxes, insurance, maintenance) and liability associated with holding this vacant property, it is in the best interest of the Presbytery that this property be sold as quickly as possible. Authorizing Leadership Council to negotiate and approve the sale will provide the greatest flexibility while still allowing for appropriate transaction oversight. We have precedent for using this process when dealing with properties that require a quick disposal as this is how we handled the sale of the former Community Presbyterian Church property in 2022.

Action Item #2 – COM

Committee/Commission on Ministry: Eligibility of the Rev. Emma Horn, Immanuel Presbyterian Church This item requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the members of presbytery present and voting (G-2.0504c).

Motion: The Committee on Ministry moves that National Capital Presbytery determine that its mission strategy permits the Rev. Emma Horn, who currently serves Immanuel Presbyterian Church in a temporary pastoral relationship, to be eligible to serve as the next installed Associate Pastor of Children and Youth Ministry of that congregation.

Rationale: G-2.0504b provides that a minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. G-2.0504c permits a presbytery to determine that its mission strategy warrants an exception, and requires that the presbytery establish such a relationship only by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the members present and voting. The Session of Immanuel Presbyterian Church approved this request on July 16, 2026, and the Congregational Transitions Commission sustained the Session's request on September 3, 2026.

Action Item #3 –Commission on Preparation for Ministry Report

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) report comes to the presbytery as one singular report for action that contains three motions and requires $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the presbytery.

3A.MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that John Curran be allowed to enter the expedited candidate process according to the Book of Order G-2.0610 “When a Presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d.”

Rationale: The Book of Order requires that the candidacy phase last at least one year (G-2.0602). The expedited process simply removes this time requirement. John has already completed his Master of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and has passed the five ordination exams. CPM is recommending that we waive the one-year requirement so that he can be certified ready for ministry within the accommodation timeline. He is a candidate in good standing with Lewinsville Presbyterian Church and is under care of the National Capital Presbytery’s Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

3B.MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that Cynthia Gervais be allowed to enter the expedited candidate process according to the Book of Order G-2.0610 “When a Presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d.”

Rationale: The Book of Order requires that the candidacy phase last at least one year (G-2.0602). The expedited process simply removes this time requirement. Cynthia has already completed her Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary and has passed the five ordination exams. CPM is recommending that we waive the one-year requirement so that she can be certified ready for ministry within the accommodation timeline. She is a candidate in good standing with Northeastern Presbyterian Church and is under care of the National Capital Presbytery’s Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

3C.MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that the Presbytery approve alternate-means ordination exams for Ministry Candidate Nat Amarquaye according to Book of Order G-2.0610.

Rationale: Alternative exams are a way to support individuals for whom the written ordination exams have not been successful. As the PC(USA) Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry states, “This provision recognizes written examinations are not appropriate means by which to assess some individuals’ ministry competence” (p. 59). When individuals take the exams multiple times with the same result, or express a desire for a format that supports them if English is not their first language, CPM deems these reasons for alternate means exams. Lastly, the motion is intentionally worded so that the presbytery would be approving alternative means of examination, for all the areas covered by the standard ordination exams, for this candidate.

Worship

Installations

- 1) Installation to the office of Stated Clerk, Rev. Alex G. Evangelista
- 2) Installation to the office of Moderator, Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes (Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church)
- 3) Installation to the office of Vice-Moderator, Elder Marco Grimaldo (Church of the Pilgrims)

Commissioned

Beatrice Laryea, Commissioned Ruling Elder at Christ the King Presbyterian Church

Sacrament of Holy Communion

New Business

Standing Rule #6 (SR-6), Bringing New Business to Presbytery Meeting

Whenever new business is moved and seconded at any Presbytery meeting from the floor, that business shall be referred to the Leadership Council for its recommendation and report followed by action at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery unless $\frac{3}{4}$ of the assembly votes to consider it at the end of the agenda of the current Presbytery meeting.

Charge, Blessing, and Adjournment | Moderator, Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes

Rev. Alex Evangelista
Stated Clerk

Attached Reports for the Presbytery Meeting Agenda

- Nominating Committee Report
- Stated Clerk Report
- Leadership Council Report
- May 19, 2026, Presbytery Meeting Minutes

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee presents the following items as their written report for approval at the presbytery meeting.

The Nominating Committee moves the following nominations:

ACCP

Erin Counihan (TE, Western/Pilgrims), c/o 2029

Bills and Overtures:

Lou Durden (RE, Northminster), c/o 2029

Church Development Commission:

Shani McIlwain (RE, Faith), c/o 2029

Committee on Ministry (COM):

Priscilla Andre-Colton (RE, OPMH), c/o 2029

Billy Kluttz (TE, First Arlington), c/o 2029

Congregational Transitions Commission (CTC) of the Committee on Ministry

Matthew Nabinger (TE, Oaklands), c/o 2029

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Robbie Wellington (TE, Validated Ministry), c/o 2029

Investments

Dave Burgett (RE, Bradley Hills), c/o 2029

Mission Coordination Commission

Judith Dahmann (RE, OPMH), c/o 2027

Permanent Judicial Commission

Grace Woodward (TE, Georgetown), c/o 2031

To move the following to serve on Nominating Committee:

Shani McIlwain (RE, Faith), c/o 2029

With concurrence of the Leadership Council, to move the following to serve as committee chairs for the 26-27 year:

Bills and Overtures

Lou Durden (RE, Northminster)

COM

Carla Gorrell (TE-retired) and Kris Maldarelli (RE-Gaithersburg) as Co-chairs

Leadership Council

Jesy Littlejohn (RE, Oaklands)

Personnel

Barbara Mitchell (RE, National)

Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)

Charles Van Gorder (TE, At Large)

Representation

Mitchell Fulton (RE, Pilgrims)

Stated Clerk's Report

The clerk offers the following items for information in the Stated Clerk's written report:

To the Church Triumphant:

1. Rev. Susan Graceson, minister member of NCP, passed away on July 05, 2026.
2. Rev. Susan Wisseman, minister member of NCP, passed away on July 14, 2026.
3. Ruling Elder Joyce Jenkins, who served as Associate Stated Clerk, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer of NCP from 1989 through mid-1990s, passed away on July 20, 2026.

Regarding minister members:

1. Rev. Alex Evangelista was received as a minister member from Peace River Presbytery on May 19, 2026.
2. Retired Member of the Presbytery, Rev. David Ensign was dismissed to Presbytery of the James on August 13, 2026.
3. Rev. Aram Feinberg was received as a minister member from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia on August 19, 2026.
4. Minister Member, Rev. Katherine Rosenson was received as a minister member from Donegal Presbytery on August 19, 2026.

Regarding ordination and installation:

1. The Stated Clerk reviewed and approved the plans for the Service of Ordination and Installation for Diane Maloney at Burke Presbyterian Church on August 30, 2026. The minutes of the commission to ordain and install Diane Maloney as a minister of the Word and Sacrament have been submitted and placed in the records of the Presbytery. The following people were approved to serve as members of the commission:

Elder Jesy Littlejohn, Rev. Diane Walton Hendricks, Rev. Yena Hwang, Elder Russell Rudd, Elder Kirk Salpini.

The following person was seated as corresponding members:

Rev. Keli Shipley Cooper, Presbytery of the James

Regarding Investigating Committees:

The Stated Clerk reports that a statement of allegation was received and promptly referred to an investigating committee, which convened its first meeting on June 16, 2026. In accordance with Standing Rule #4, the Stated Clerk reports the following persons serving on this investigating committee: Rev. Dr. J.C. Cadwallader, Chair; Rev. Lisa Larsen; Elder Michael Rankin; Elder David Schottke; and Elder Sally Shiomichi.

The Stated Clerk reports receiving a statement of allegation on September 10, 2026, and promptly referred it to an investigating committee, which convened its first meeting on September 15, 2026. In accordance with Standing Rule #4, the Stated Clerk reports the following persons serving on this investigating committee: Rev. Dr. J.C. Cadwallader, Chair; Rev. Lisa Larsen; Elder Michael Rankin; Elder David Schottke; and Elder Sally Shiomichi.

Leadership Council

LC Motion #1: Leadership Council recommends that the Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church property, located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue SE, Washington, DC be sold. Proceeds of the sale be used to reimburse costs associated with carrying this property and any remaining monies be added to the Property Management Fund to assist the presbytery in future property endeavors. It is further recommended that: the buyer be selected and terms negotiated by Leadership Council (or their designee) and reported back to the Presbytery; and that the NCP Treasurer be authorized to sign all documents related to the transaction on behalf of the Presbytery as an officer of the corporation.

Background and Rationale:

In 2017, tax debt for the worship property associated with Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church located at 1720 Minnesota Ave SE (Washington DC) was sold at tax sale. Months of correspondence and negotiations resulted in NCP paying property taxes totaling approx. \$55,000 and incurring \$20,000 in legal fees. The congregation entered into an agreement to repay tax portion only, on a monthly, interest-free plan. As part of the agreement with NCP, the daycare was to vacate the premises to ensure they would not continue to incur property taxes.

In July 2022, NCP became aware that Garden Memorial was again delinquent in property taxes which resulted in the property being sold again at tax sale in large part because they had continued to allow the for-profit day care to operate in their basement.

The resulting actions led to Presbytery advancing funds to redeem property taxes and set up an AC to access congregational vitality (2022). After multiple attempts to meet with congregation members, and in light of there being no services held or business conducted by the church since March of 2020, the Presbytery amended the authority of the AC to dissolve the congregation (2023). The AC took action to dissolve the congregation in June of 2023. As a result, NCP files legal action to have the property placed in its name. A 3-year legal battle ensued. During this time, the property became inhabited by unhoused people resulting in significant damage and causing disruption to the neighborhood.

Since 2022, NCP has spent approximately \$901,495 caring for and defending its claim to the property. This is in addition to costs still not recovered from the tax issue in 2017 and outstanding monies owed by Garden Memorial to the Ministry Crisis Fund. A summary of monies spent to date is included in this packet.

The property is currently listed for sale with Foundry Commercial, our trusted real estate partner who specializes in ministry property. There are some significant challenges with the property – namely the condition. In addition to the damage caused by unhoused individuals occupying the property for a significant portion of time while our legal standing was defended, there is structural damage to the roof, and water damage. All mechanical and electrical systems have sustained catastrophic, irreparable damage. The tax valuation of the property places the value of the property at \$5,601,240, which is broken down as \$757,760 in land valuation and \$4,843,480 as the valuation of the building and improvements. Our brokers feel that, given the condition of the building, the valuation is much closer to the land portion of the valuation. As we have begun to receive formal offers, the market supports this assessment. With this in mind, the above motion is presented.

Garden Memorial Timeline

*This timeline outlines events from 2020-present and does not document or account for the issues prior to 2020 which included an AC in 2008 and tax sale of property in 2017. **This document was included in the packet for the May 2026 Presbytery and has been updated to reflect actions occurring after that date.***

- July 2022 Became aware that the property was listed and sold at tax sale.
- August 2022 Gathered information, consulted church representatives, reviewed history of tax sale for this property, sought legal counsel, and updated Leadership Council.
- September 2022 Leadership Council takes the following actions:
- Leadership Council moves that the Presbytery pay outstanding taxes owed to the District of Columbia for the worship property located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. Communication regarding this action is to be sent to all known members of the church. The DC Resurrection Fund will be used for expenses related to this action, including all legal fees incurred by the Presbytery.*
- Leadership Council moves that the presbytery designate an Administrative Commission (AC), members to be appointed by the moderator, to assume original jurisdiction and act as the session for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to assess the vitality of the congregation. The commission is instructed to report quarterly to Leadership Council. (Congregation notified of these actions)*
- Requested to meet with representatives of the congregation at the property. Were denied.
- Staff visited property to assess property condition (exterior only).
- Met with members of the congregation via zoom. Learned that the congregation had not been worshipping since the 2020 when the pandemic began. Learned there had been no Session or Congregational meetings since 2020 because they had no business to discuss.
- Prior to September Presbytery Meeting Church Member B begins campaign to pastors in the NCP directory asking them to vote NO on an AC, calls Synod Executive, and threatens civil action.
- Presbytery Meeting approved the motion put forward by Leadership Council (listed in timeline above). As part of this meeting an Action Item Dialogue was held to educate Presbytery on scope of issues.
- October 2022 AC is formed. Congregation is notified. Members of AC are: Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, Elder Shani McIlwain, Elder Charles Barber, Elder

Sandra Barrett, Rev. Mark Gaskill, Rev. Juan Guthrie, and Rev. Ruth Hamilton.

Members of AC and Presbytery Staff meet at church to assess building condition and obtain membership information so that work of AC can begin. Met at church by a member who refused to provide directory/roles/member contact information.

Church Member B successfully submits DC Real Property Tax Exemption Form so that tax liability is reduced

NCP pays past due taxes in the amount of \$

11/22-3/23

AC attempts to meet several times with members of the congregation. Attempts are blocked by Church Members A & B. A handful of members do meet with AC and those are very supportive of the work that is trying to be done.

March 2023

AC approves the following action:

*Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church **AUTHORIZE** the National Capital Presbytery Treasurer to take appropriate legal action to secure and hold the property of the church in the name of National Capital Presbytery, Inc.*

Presbytery Staff authorizes legal counsel to file quiet claim to the property.

At the March Presbytery Meeting, the following action was taken:

*The Leadership Council recommends that the Presbytery **AMEND** the charge of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, established in September 2022, to add the following:*

The Administrative Commission, after consultation with such remaining members of the congregation as it is able to contact, shall have the power and authority, at its sole discretion, to carry out all matters related to the dissolution of the church:

*1. The continued exercise of original jurisdiction, in accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0303e**.*

2. Pastoral care of the members.

3. An appropriate celebration of the ministry and mission of the congregation.

4. The orderly dismissal of members to other congregations of their choosing.

5. Securing, holding, and using of the properties of the congregation, including the maintenance of property and liability insurance.

6. *The making of recommendations to the Presbytery about the sale or disposition of such property.*
7. *Conveying all original church records (minutes, rolls, and registers) and historically important documents or artifacts to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery for preservation.*
8. *Dissolving the legal corporation once all property has been transferred or disposed of.*

The Moderator of the Presbytery shall have the authority to fill any vacancies that may arise in the membership of the Commission.

*In accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0109(b)**, the Commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings for incorporation into the records of the Presbytery. The Commission shall report its decisions to the Stated Clerk, who shall report them to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.*

Dr. Walton-Hendricks invited the Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, chair of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to speak about the work of the commission.

*Following a period of discussion, the Presbytery voted, and the motion was **carried**.*

April 2023

Presbytery becomes aware that “Congregation” is attempting to mortgage the property. Legal counsel advises and is subsequently authorized to file a lis pendens on the property to prevent mortgage.

Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones steps down from AC. Elder Lucius Durden joins AC and is elected chair.

DC Government affixes notice to the property door declaring the property vacant.

Become aware of \$9,000 water lien on property and multiple Department of Building infractions relating to condition of property (i.e. overgrown bushes, etc.)

May 2023

Member of “congregation” sends letter to PC(USA) notifying of their intent to disaffiliate/withdrawal from PC(USA).

June 2023

The AC took the following action:

The Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church acted in accordance with the authority conferred by the Presbytery on March 28, to DISSOLVE Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

August 2023

Paperwork filed with courts asserting NCP’s claim to the property.

Members of Congregation meet offsite (no utilities were on at the property) to discuss putting Solar Panels on property as a means of generating income.

Attorneys send letter notifying congregation that they may not install solar panels.

Notified that solar panel project is on hold due to the need for roof repairs. Attorneys interview to prevent contractor to perform repairs as property is not insured. (NOTE NCP UNABLE TO INSURE PROPERTY AT THIS TIME BECAUSE MEMBER WILL NOT ALLOW NCP ACCESS TO PROPERTY TO PERFORM A BASIC INSEPCION REQUIRED BY INSURANCE COMPANY).

September 2023 Received notice that Church Member A responded to NCP claim to filing and filed a counterclaim asserting his authority to hold the property as a Trustee of the church.

Received note that court rejected said member's counterclaim.

Counterclaim was refiled by Church Member A.

October 2023 On advice of counsel, NCP files paperwork to have the property declared vacant.

Received word that property is being occupied by unhoused people.

Filed order with DC courts that NCP be granted access to the property so that steps to secure it can be taken.

Presbytery staff go to property to observe activity.

November 2023 Receive notice that NCP's request to have property taxes exempted on grounds of legal dispute. Appeal subsequently filed.

Received notice that counterclaim to NCP filing (original filing) were dismissed.

Affidavits are filed by staff, contractors and neighbors to bolster request to have access granted for purpose of securing property.

Received notice that an attorney entered his appearance as counsel for "defendants" however, the "defendants" were not identified.

December 2023 At hearing for access to property the "defendants" attorney requested more time to identify who he represents as well as to respond to this hearing. Both were granted.

Opposing party files motion opposing our request to access the property.

Received notice that our initial claim asserting our right to the property was dismissed on the grounds they the DC court did not have jurisdiction.

January 2024 Motion to have dismissal reconsidered was filed.

Hearing requesting access to property was cancelled. Notice that an order was forthcoming was received.

February 2024 Metro Police Department begins calling NCP regarding complaints from neighbors about activity at property.

Received Department of Buildings notice that property has been fined because a door has been kicked in.

Motion to reconsider our claim asserting NCP right to the property was granted. Court requested we refile all of our motions to date.

March 2024 Send letter to DOB outlining our position as owner of the property and requesting all outstanding invoices so they can be cured.

Received notice that motion to serve defendants and unknown persons by publication was approved.

Church Member A filed motion to intervene in our claim as well as a counterclaim asserting his right to the property.

Church Member A files motions opposing service by publication and our request to Access the property. NCP filed responses to both.

April 2024 Motion granted allowing NCP access to the property for purposes of securing it. Some conditions were placed around any repairs that might be done.

Motion denying Church Member A's request to intervene in NCP's claim to the property was denied.

A deadline of May 8th was set for filings related to the Property Claim case.

June 2024 Hearing in the case resulted in additional time for the opposing party to submit answers.

July 2024 Church Member A filed an additional counterclaim stating he had been appointed as a Trustee.

Opposing counsel submitted filing withdrawing himself from the case. The church was given time to file an answer to his filing.

August 2024 Filed our witness list ahead of hearing.

Our motion to strike Church Member A's response and counter claim was granted.

September 2024	Church member A filed motion to have his answer and counterclaim reconsidered.
October 2024	Court denies Church Member A's request for reconsideration.
November 2024	Church Member A files appeal of denial of his request for reconsideration. NCP files motion of default to advance Property Claim case. Opposing counsel was granted permission to withdraw.
December 2024	Hearing on the NCP's default motion was continued until late January.
January 2025	Motion filed by Church Member A appealing their counsel's withdrawal from the case was denied. Work to secure property is completed. All appeals by Church Member A were denied. Fire breaks out on porch of the church. Minimal damage was done. Fire did not breach into the interior.
February 2025	At hearing NCP's motion of default was granted; however order needed to be amended to include both the Church and Trustees.
March 2025	NCP Files motion for judgement. NCP receives order granting judgement.
April 2025	Church Member A filed motion appeal judgement, despite missing deadline.
May 2025	NCP files to record deed in its name, based on the Judgement Order. DC Court of Appeals issues Order to Show Cause to Church Member A. He has 20 days to respond.
June 2025	Recorder of Deed rejects NCP Deed because they are requiring NCP to pay recordation and transfer taxes. Leadership Council passes the following motion allowing NCP to pay recording fees relating to recording deed in NCP's name: <i>That the Leadership Council AUTHORIZE the expenditure of \$164,108.10 from the Office Fund for the full amount of the fees related to recording the deed for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, with the funds to be reimbursed to the Office Fund when either the fees are refunded or the property sells, whichever happens first.</i>
July 2025	Church Member A does not file a response to Show Cause Order from DC Court of Appeals; however, DC Court of Appeals rules to allow the appeal to go forward without response from Church Member A.

August 2025	NCP is finally able to obtain liability only insurance on property.
February 2026	Church Member A failed to submit his brief and appendix as required to advance his appeal.
March 2026	Court of Appeals dismisses case. No motions to vacate order or reconsider were filed within the deadline. Property Claim case concludes.
April 2026	Property is listed for sale with Foundry Commercial.
May 2026	Presbytery hears an extensive update on the property and votes to advance necessary funds to pay outstanding property taxes.
August 2026	DOB grants vacancy exemption for 1 st half of 2026 property taxes and credits amount paid towards bill for 2 nd half of 2026 taxes. File paperwork seeking to have exemption applied to 2 nd half of 2026.
September 2026	Receive two offers on property – request approval at September Meeting to official sell the property.

Not included in this timeline are the multiple vacancy tax exemption filings and appeals that occurred to keep the property current on property taxes and the work done with Department of Building to cure fines related to activity at the property.

Garden Memorial Expenses

Below is line item summary of expenses paid to date relating to Garden Memorial.

Expenses 2022-September 17 2026		
Legal	\$	158,832.62
Taxes	\$	466,027.18
Property Fines & Related Expenses	\$	112,526.99
Deed Transfer Fees	\$	164,108.10
	\$	901,494.89
Outstanding Monies (Prior to 2022)		
Remaining Expenses Related to 2018 Tax Matter	\$	42,000.00
Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan	\$	14,935.79
Past Due Per Capita	\$	31,659.18
	\$	88,594.97
Total Investment	\$	990,089.86

Line-Item Descriptions

- Legal – Attorney Fees, Filing Fees, Notary Expenses, Legal Research, etc.
- Taxes – Property Taxes

- Property Fines & Related Expenses – Department of Building Fines, Code Violations & Remediations, Expenses Related to Securing the Property, Clearing Utility Debt owed by congregation
- Deed Transfer Fees – Fees paid to transfer deed into NCP name (a chance this will be recouped through appeal)
- Remaining Expenses Related to 2018 Tax Matter – Balance of loan to Garden Memorial for the tax lien portion of clearing the 2017/18 tax situation
- Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan – Balance remaining on loan to Garden Memorial to pay out severance related to pastoral transition
- Past Due Per Capita – Per Capita owed for years 2004-2023

[END OF GARDEN MEMORIAL SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION]

LC Motion #2 (this motion has two parts):

2A. MOTION: Leadership Council recommends that NCP amend the MEMBERSHIP section under INVESTMENT COMMITTEE, in the Manual of Administrative Operations, to the following:

(Text to be added is [in brackets and underlined]. Text to be deleted is [in brackets and struck through].)

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP:

~~[The Investment Committee shall be composed of three (3) members divided into three (3) equal classes, one of which is elected each year by the Presbytery. Term of service is three (3) years with an individual eligible to serve up to six (6) consecutive years.]~~

~~[The Chair shall be elected from within the membership by the Presbytery upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee after consultation with the Committee and the approval of the Leadership Council for a term of one (1) year, with the individual eligible to serve up to three (3) years. The Vice-Chair and Clerk shall be elected by the Committee itself annually.]~~

[The Investment Committee shall be composed of the members of the Budget and Finance Committee. A member of the Budget and Finance Committee serves on the Investment Committee for the duration of that member's term on the Budget and Finance Committee.]

[The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Clerk of the Budget and Finance Committee shall serve in the same offices for the Investment Committee.]

[The Investment Committee shall convene as a distinct body and shall keep minutes separate from those of the Budget and Finance Committee. The Investment Committee may convene during a meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee. If this occurs, the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee shall record when the Investment Committee convened and when it adjourned, and the actions of the Investment Committee shall be recorded in the minutes of the Investment Committee.]

2B. MOTION: To have this amendment go into immediate effect upon approval by the presbytery. Members serving on the Investment Committee conclude their service on the approval of this motion. This part of the motion is not proposed for inclusion in the text of the Manual.

Background:

Because of the challenges filling the *Investment Committee* and the very limited role they play now that our funds are with managed brokerages, it has been proposed to both committees that *Budget & Finance* take the role of the *Investment Committee* when the new *Manual of Administrative Operations* is created and approved. This action would not only allow for consolidated work, it would mean that our investments were being tracked monthly by the committee charged with reviewing the whole of our finances. Furthermore, many of the folks sitting on *Budget & Finance* already have the skills needed to review our investments.

Over the summer, the broker managing our account at Raymond James abruptly left the firm to start a new company, leaving our funds unmanaged. Our funds need to be in a managed brokerage account and, therefore, we need to change brokerages. This presents a problem as the *Investment Committee*, who are charged with making decisions regarding our investment brokerage, is non-functioning.

Until a new Manual of Administrative Operations is presented, we are stuck in unmanaged accounts. In discussion with the Stated Clerk, this proposed amendment seats the *Budget & Finance* as the *Investment Committee*, so that the work of moving our investment accounts from Raymond James could commence.

Rationale:

The Presbytery still elects everyone who serves. Nobody sits on the Investment Committee who was not elected by the Presbytery. The election simply happens once instead of twice.

This is the lighter path. Dissolving the Investment Committee outright would require moving its functions elsewhere in the manual and would break references to it in the Financial Policies and in our agreements with investment managers. Keeping the committee in place preserves those references and leaves the structural work to the larger overhaul.

It matches how the work already happens. The same staff support both committees, and the subject matter overlaps heavily. The amendment recognizes the practice rather than inventing one.

The existing checks stay in place. The Investment Committee continues to report to the Leadership Council, the Council continues to approve investment policy changes, and the Council continues its annual conflict of interest assessment of all committees.

The record stays clean. Separate minutes matter. Our Policy on Right to Inspect Books and Records quotes the District of Columbia requirement that the corporation keep minutes of committees exercising any of the authority of the board. The Investment Committee directs the portfolio and selects investment managers, so its minutes are exactly that kind of record and are open to inspection. Keeping them in their own book means we can answer a request cleanly.

**MINUTES OF THE 327TH STATED MEETING OF
THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESBYTERY (NCP) OFFICE,
NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

May 19th, 2026

5:00 p.m.

We Gather in Community

The 327th Stated Meeting of National Capital Presbytery was called to order at 5:04 pm by the moderator Elder Jesy Littlejohn with an introduction of Themselves, the Vice Moderator, Rev. Rachel Vaagenes and Co-Acting Stated Clerk Rev. John Molina-Moore. In-Person at National Presbyterian Church. Vice-Moderator Rev. Rachel Vaagenes offers opening prayer and gives instructions for the Stated Meeting. There were 196 registered and present.

The Vice Moderator Rev. Rachel Vaagenes noted that a QUORUM was present. The attendance roll was formed by pre-registrations and first-time commissioners were welcomed.

The Moderator recognizes corresponding member Stated Clerk and Synod Executive Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins to be seated as a corresponding member of the presbytery meeting. The motion moved forward. The motion was seconded. **The Presbytery approved the motion.**

Meeting Leaders

Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter and Acting Stated Clerk

Elder Jesy Littlejohn, NCP Moderator

Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes, NCP Vice-Moderator

Rev. Jeri Fields, Leadership Council Chair

Heather Deacon, Senior Director of Finance & Operations and Treasurer

Rev. Katie Murchison Ross, Nominating Committee Chair

Rev. Juli Wilson-Black, Chair, Stated Clerk Search Committee

OMNIBUS MOTION

From the Stated Clerk:

- The Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the NCP Stated Meetings held on March 24, 2026.

From the Nominating Committee

To move the following for nomination:

Administrative Commission on Congregational Property

- Peter Manning (TE, First Arlington), c/o 2029

Budget and Finance

- Richard Johnson (RE, OPMH), c/o 2029
- Don Humphries (RE, Northminster), c/o 2029

Committee on Ministry (COM)

- Scott Ramsey (TE, Lewinsville), c/o 2029

Congregational Transitions Commission (CTC)

- Roy Martin (TE, Retired), c/o 2029
- Carolyn Tilley (TE, validated ministry/Takoma Park), c/o 2029

Personnel

- Alice Ogden Bellis (TE, validated ministry/Fifteenth Street), c/o 2029

Session Records

- Bob Patrick (RE, Grace-Springfield), c/o 2029

From the Leadership Council

To move the following for nomination:

Nominating Committee

- Kori Philips McMurtry (TE, Christian Community Presbyterian), c/o 2029
- Erin Counihan (TE, Pilgrims/Western), c/o 2029

To move the following to serve as co-chair for the remainder of the 25-26 year:

- COM Co-Chair: Kris Maldarelli (RE, Gaithersburg)

To move the following to serve as chairs for the 26-27 year:

- ACCP: LeAnn Hodges (TE, Gaithersburg)
- Budget and Finance: Mark Stunder (RE, Boyds)
- CPM: Blair Moorhead (TE, Immanuel)
- Investments: Karl Hoffman (Lay member, New York Avenue)
- Nominating: Katie Murchison Ross (TE, Grace Springfield)
- Session Records: Julia McBee (RE, St. Matthew)

The Presbytery Approved the Omnibus Motion. 05/19/2026

MINISTERS PRESENT(101):

Anderson	Denise	Gorrell	Carla
Baker	Matthew	Goss	Beth
Blackshaw	Hille	Gray	David
Bolton	Jacob	Greniven	Rebekah
Brookens	Elizabeth	Guthrie	Juan
Brown	Meghan	Hackett	J. Campbell
Butler	Jennifer	Hamilton	Brian
Byrd	Cameron	Harasty	Shelby
Cadwallader	Jocelyn	Harper	Mark
Collins	Blake	Hayward	Larry
Core	Sharon	Hayward	Maggie
Counihan	Erin	Hendricks	Diane W
Crawford	Adele	Hodges	LeAnn
Culp	Caitlin	Horn	Emma
D'Andrea	Emily	Hwang	Yena
Douthett	David	Hylton	Raymond
Douthett	Molly	Jervis	Madeline
Dunfee	Jennifer	Jokela	William
Evangelista	Alex	Klingensmith	Leslie
Fields	Jeri	Klose	Megan
Fitzgibbon	Laura	Kluttz	Billy
Forsyth	Eric	Koppel	Michael
Foster	Garnett	Larsen	Lisa
Fox	Quinn	MacDonald	Shawn
Franke	Kristen	MacKenzie	Jeanne
Fulp-Eickstaedt	Aaron	McAuliffe	Christopher
Gonzalez-Block	Samantha	McCollum	Brian
		McDonald	Dean

McDonald	Jim
McMurtry	Kori
Meek	Craig
Meeks	Don
Molina-Moore	John
Moorhead	Blair
Morse	Sterling
Nabinger	Matty
Neal	Nancy
Olson	Dana
Parker-Jones	Bernice
Patterson	Olivia
Piedmonte-Silvoy	Mark
Ramsey	Scott
Rathje	Ken
Rodawla	Jacob
Ross	Katie
Sarpong	Samuel
Spuhler McCabe	Tara
Sugirtharaj	Devadosan
Sutton	Todd

Tafie	Josephine
Tate	Jessica
Teichert	Molly
Thompson	Casey
Thompson	Keith
Tilley	Carolyn
Ulmer	Holly
Vaagenes	Rachel
van Gorder	Charles
Walker	Elizabeth
Wayland	Rose
Welch	Cara
Williams	David
Williams	Elisabeth
Williams	Emilee
Wilson-Black	Juli
Woodward	Grace
Yoon	Taekhan

MINISTERS EXCUSED (30):

Austell	Robert
Baer	David
Bellis	Alice
Brinton	Henry
Futato	Pat
Gaskill	Mark
Herlin	Ann
Hunnicut	Patrick
Jordan-Haas	Connie
Kapp	Deborah
Kenkeremath	Lisa
Lee	Hope
Lee	Sung
Lundeen	Allison
Manning	Peter
Martin	Lisa

Martin	Roy
McKibben Dana	MaryAnn
Milam	Rev. Dr. David
Park	Yeonik
Pooley	Matthew
Reimers	Christine
Rodriguez	Adrian
Smith-Cobbs	Stephen
Stanford	Katherine
Strednak Singer	Katie
Swayze	Beverly
Swayze	Richard
Trawick	Ben
Wellington	Robert

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS PRESENT (3):

Grace	Atanga-Fuh
Kris	Maldarelli
LeQuan	Turner

Lewis	Peggy	National
Littlejohn	Jesy	Oaklands

Mandragos	Charlotte	Good Samaritan
Massie	Kathy	Manassas
McGeehan	Janis	Southminster

ELDER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (70):

AbiNajm	Jenifer	Fairfax
Allen	Chuck	Vienna
Antonelli	John	First Arlington
Asinor	Dr Freddie	Christ the King
Bailey	Beth	Trinity, Arlington
Brooks	Laura	Fairlington
Brown	Morgan	New York Avenue
Cornelius	Deborah	First United Dale City
Daugherty	Nancy R	Pilgrims
Davis	Kimberly	Clifton
Davis	Lorethea	Northminster
Davis	Rebecca	New York Avenue
Dewhurst	Miriam	New York Avenue
	Martha	Westminster,
DeWitt	Bess	Alexandria
Durden	Lou	Northminster
		Emmanuel Indonesian
Ellis	Anita	Presbyterian
Eplee	Gene	Laurel
Ford	Kristin	New York Avenue
Fortune	Reginald	Sargent Memorial
Foster	Emily	Lewinsville
Friedman	Kathy	Grace Lanham
Gaffney	John	Bradley Hills
		Westminster,
Griffin	Adrienne	Alexandria
Gutliph	JoAnne	Manassas
Harrison-		
Kendall	India	Grace Lanham
Hayes	Edward	Heritage
		Rockville United
Hockensmith	Dan	Church
Hunter	Robert	Immanuel
Kim	Ray	Western
Leavens	Deborah	Lewinsville
		Prince George's
Lee	Linda	Community

Mandragos	Charlotte	Good Samaritan
Massie	Kathy	Manassas
McGeehan	Janis	Southminster
Mcllwain	Shani	Faith
Melberg	Evi	Gaithersburg
Montgomery	Willie	Fifteenth Street
Mori	Sandra	First Annandale
Nadig	Claudia	Capitol Hill
Naig	Claudia	Capitol Hill
Nixon	Tony	Faith
Ockerman	Emily	Capitol Hill
Parker	Alexandra	Gaithersburg
Patrick	Susan	Colesville
Pollick	Lynn	Arlington
Porter	Sara	First United Dale City
Pratt	Dana	Immanuel
		Westminster,
Randall	Karen	Alexandria
Rarumangkay	Joyce	Clifton
Roe	Price	National
Rogers	Diane	Colesville
		United Christian Parish
Rohrer	Megan	of Reston
Schottke	Dave	National
Sims	Michele	Sargent Memorial
Smith	David	Burke
Stunder	Mark	Other
Summers	Jan	Darnestown
		United Christian Parish
Vollmer	Nancy	of Reston
Volpe	Michael	Falls Church
Walker	Johnny	Sargent Memorial
	Mary	Church of the
Whipple	Margaret	Covenant
White	Donzell	Southminster
Williams	Karen	Clifton
Wrightson	Jim	Clifton
Yamate	May	National
Yanisko	George	New Hope
Zhang	Bin	Hermon

CHURCHES NOT REPRESENTED BY ELDER COMMISSIONERS:

Aldie, Arlington, Ashburn, Bealeton, Bethesda, Brambleton, Brentsville, Burke, Calvary, Chesterbrook Taiwanese, Christ Presbyterian, Covenant, Ebenezer, Fairfax, Furnace Mountain, Geneva, Georgetown, Grace Lanham, Greenwich, Heritage, Hope, Idlywood, John Calvin, Knox, Korean Presbyterian Church of Rockville, Leesburg, Litchfield, Little Falls, Mizo, Mount Vernon, Northeastern, Northern Virginia Korean, Oaklands, Poolesville, Potomac, Riverside, Rock, Saint Mark, Silver Spring, Sixth, St. Andrew, St. Matthew, Taiwanese Presbyterian, United Korean, United Parish of Bowie, Western, Westminster DC, Wheaton

The Moderator recognized the Chair of the Leadership Council, the Rev. Jeri Fields, to present ACTION ITEM #1 for the Garden Memorial taxes to be paid through the DC Resurrection Fund. The Moderator also recognized National Capital Presbytery's Senior Director of Finance & Operations, Heather Deacon. Rev. Fields recognized Rev. John Molina-Moore to give some background of what has occurred with the congregation and property of Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. Next, Rev. Molina-Moore recognized Mrs. Deacon to give more depth to the Presbytery on what happened within the leadership, congregation, and property of Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Deacon expressed the timeline of events for learning about the past due property taxes and what happened during the closure. Please find the timeline below.

The Moderator encourages the Presbytery to take a deep breath and invites up the Chair of Leadership Council to present the Motion to the Presbytery.

ACTION ITEM #1

Leadership Council - Garden Memorial

MOTION: The Leadership Council moves that National Capital Presbytery utilize the DC Resurrection fund to pay outstanding taxes owed to the District of Columbia for the property located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, formerly known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Rationale: As outlined in the enclosed materials, NCP has been in a 3-year legal process of defending our claim to the worship property related to the former Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. As part of this process, the property was declared vacant. This declaration triggered a property tax liability. The DC government allows for a significant reduction in property taxes if the property is subject to litigation. NCP has been able to access this reduction each year, but only after going through a multi-level appeal process. The result being that a portion of the 2024 and 2025 tax debt was sold at tax sale before the appeal process for 2024 and 2025 had concluded. On the advice of NCP attorneys, we did not pay those portions until the resolution was reached. With the litigation reduction now properly applied, NCP must redeem the taxes for 2024 and 2025

The current amount of tax debt owed to the District of Columbia is approximately \$109,626.

Note: The balance in the DC Resurrection fund as of March 31 is \$1,100,269

Garden Memorial Summary Background

In 2017, tax debt for the worship property associated with Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church located at 1720 Minnesota Ave SE (Washington DC) was sold at tax sale. Months of correspondence and negotiations resulted in NCP paying property taxes totaling approximately \$55,000 and incurring \$20,000 in legal fees. The congregation entered into an agreement to repay the tax portion only on a monthly, interest-free plan. These payments were consistently made through April of 2021. The last payment recorded on the loan was in March of 2022. The tax liability impacting this situation occurred because of a for-profit day care that operated in the basement of the church building. As part of the agreement with NCP, the daycare was to vacate the premises to ensure they would not continue to incur property taxes.

In July 2022, NCP became aware that Garden Memorial was again delinquent in property taxes, which resulted in the property being sold again at tax sale in large part because they had continued to allow the for-profit day care to operate in their basement.

The resulting actions led to the Presbytery advancing funds to redeem property taxes and set up an AC to access congregational vitality (2022). After multiple attempts to meet with congregation members, and in light of there being no services held or business conducted by the church since March of 2020, the Presbytery amended the authority of the AC to dissolve the congregation (2023). The AC took action to dissolve the congregation in June of 2023. As a result, NCP files legal action to have the property placed in its name. A 3-year legal battle ensued. During this time, the property became inhabited by unhoused people resulting in significant damage and causing disruption to the neighborhood.

Since 2022, NCP has spent approximately \$610,233 caring for and defending its claim to the property. This is in addition to costs still not recovered from the tax issue in 2017 and outstanding monies owed by Garden Memorial to the Ministry Crisis Fund. A summary of monies spent to date is included in this packet.

The property is currently listed for sale with Foundry Commercial. We anticipate coming back to the floor in the coming months requesting permission to approve the sale of this property.

Garden Memorial Expenses

Below is line item summary of expenses paid to date relating to Garden Memorial.

Expenses 2022-March 31, 2026		
Legal	\$	146,574.54
Taxes	\$	190,077.41
Property Fines & Related Expenses	\$	109,473.24
Deed Transfer Fees	\$	<u>164,108.10</u>
	\$	610,233.29
Outstanding Monies (Prior to 2022)		
Remaining Expenses Related to 2018 Tax Matter	\$	42,000.00
Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan	\$	14,935.79
Past Due Per Capita	\$	<u>31,659.18</u>
	\$	88,594.97

Line-Item Descriptions

- Legal – Attorney Fees, Filing Fees, Notary Expenses, Legal Research, etc.
- Taxes – Property Taxes
- Property Fines & Related Expenses – Department of Building Fines, Code Violations & Remediations, Expenses Related to Securing the Property, Clearing Utility Debt owed by congregation
- Deed Transfer Fees – Fees paid to transfer deed into NCP name (a chance this will be recouped through appeal)
- Remaining Expenses Related to 2018 Tax Matter – Balance of loan to Garden Memorial for the tax lien portion of clearing the 2017/18 tax situation
- Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan – Balance remaining on loan to Garden Memorial to pay out severance related to pastoral transition
- Past Due Per Capita – Per Capita owed for years 2004-2023

Garden Memorial Timeline, 2020-Present

This timeline outlines events from 2020-present and does not document or account for the issues prior to 2020 which include the sale of tax debt on the property in 2017.

July 2022 Became aware that the tax debt on the worship property had been sold at DC tax sale.

August 2022 Gathered information, consulted church representatives, reviewed history of tax sale for this property, sought legal counsel, and updated Leadership Council.

September 2022 Leadership Council takes the following actions:

Leadership Council moves that the Presbytery pay outstanding taxes owed to the District of Columbia for the worship property located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. Communication regarding this action is to be sent to all known members of the church. The DC Resurrection Fund will be used for expenses related to this action, including all legal fees incurred by the Presbytery.

Leadership Council moves that the presbytery designate an Administrative Commission (AC), members to be appointed by the moderator, to assume original jurisdiction and act as the session for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to assess the vitality of the congregation. The commission is instructed to report quarterly to Leadership Council. (Congregation notified of these actions)

Requested to meet with representatives of the congregation at the property. Were denied.

Staff visited property to assess condition (exterior only).

Met with members of the congregation via zoom. Learned that the congregation had not been worshipping since 2020 (when the pandemic began). Learned there had been no Session or Congregational meetings since 2020 because they had no business to discuss (their words).

Prior to September Presbytery Meeting Church Member B began campaign to pastors in the NCP directory asking them to vote “no” on an AC, calls Synod Executive, and threatens civil action.

Presbytery Meeting approved the motion put forward by Leadership Council (listed in timeline above). As part of this meeting an Action Item Dialogue was held to educate Presbytery on scope of issues.

October 2022

AC is formed. Congregation is notified. Members of AC are: Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, Elder Charles Barber, Elder Sandra Barrett, Rev. Mark Gaskill, Rev. Juan Guthrie, and Rev. Ruth Hamilton.

Members of AC and Presbytery Staff meet at church to further assess building condition and obtain membership information so that work of AC can begin. Met at church by a member who refused to provide directory/roles/member contact information.

Church Member B successfully submits DC Real Property Tax Exemption Form so that tax liability is reduced

NCP pays past due taxes in the amount of \$54,439.27

11/22-3/23

AC attempts to meet several times with members of the congregation. Attempts are blocked by Church Members A & B. A handful of members do meet with AC and those are very supportive of the work that is trying to be done.

March 2023

AC approves the following action:

Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church
AUTHORIZE the National Capital Presbytery Treasurer to take appropriate legal action to secure and hold the property of the church in the name of National Capital Presbytery, Inc.

Presbytery Staff authorize legal counsel to file quiet claim to the property.

At the March Presbytery Meeting, the following action was taken:

*The Leadership Council recommends that the Presbytery **AMEND** the charge of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, established in September 2022, to add the following:*

The Administrative Commission, after consultation with such remaining members of the congregation as it is able to contact, shall have the power and authority, at its sole discretion, to carry out all matters related to the dissolution of the church:

1. The continued exercise of original jurisdiction, in accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0303e**.

2. Pastoral care of the members.

3. An appropriate celebration of the ministry and mission of the congregation.

4. The orderly dismissal of members to other congregations of their choosing.

5. Securing, holding, and using of the properties of the congregation, including the maintenance of property and liability insurance.

6. The making of recommendations to the Presbytery about the sale or disposition of such property.

7. Conveying all original church records (minutes, rolls, and registers) and historically important documents or artifacts to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery for preservation.

8. Dissolving the legal corporation once all property has been transferred or disposed of.

The Moderator of the Presbytery shall have the authority to fill any vacancies that may arise in the membership of the Commission.

*In accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0109(b)**, the Commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings for incorporation into the records of the Presbytery. The Commission shall report its decisions to the Stated Clerk, who shall report them to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.*

Dr. Walton-Hendricks invited the Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, chair of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to speak about the work of the commission.

*Following a period of discussion, the Presbytery voted, and the motion was **carried**.*

April 2023

Presbytery becomes aware that “congregation” is attempting to mortgage the property. Legal counsel advises and is subsequently authorized to file a lis pendens on the property to prevent mortgage.

Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones steps down from AC. Edler Lucius Durden joins AC and is elected chair.

	DC Government affixes notice to the property door declaring the property vacant.
	Become aware of \$9,000 lien on property by DC Water and multiple Department of Building infractions relating to condition of property (i.e. overgrown bushes, etc.).
May 2023	Member B of sends letter to PC(USA) notifying of their intent to disaffiliate/withdrawal from PC(USA).
June 2023	The AC took the following action: <i>The Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church acted in accordance with the authority conferred by the Presbytery on March 28, to DISSOLVE Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)</i>
August 2023	Paperwork filed with courts asserting NCP's claim to the property. Members of "congregation" meet offsite (no utilities were on at the property) to discuss putting Solar Panels on property as a means of generating income. NCP attorneys send letter notifying "congregation" that they may not install solar panels. NCP is notified that solar panel project is on hold due to the need for roof repairs. Attorneys intervene to prevent contractor from performing repairs as property is not insured. (Note, NCP is unable to insure property at this time because NCP is not allowed to access property to perform basic inspection required by insurance company.)
September 2023	Received notice that Church Member A responded to NCP's claim to filing and subsequently filed a counterclaim asserting his authority to hold the property as a Trustee of the church. Received notice that court rejected said member's counterclaim. Counterclaim was refiled by Church Member A.
October 2023	On advice of counsel, NCP files paperwork to have the property declared vacant. Received word that property is being occupied by unhoused people.

	Filed order with DC courts that NCP be granted access to the property so that steps to secure it can be taken. Presbytery staff go to property to observe activity.
November 2023	Receive notice that NCP's request to have property taxes exempted on grounds of legal dispute was denied. Appeal subsequently filed. Received notice that counterclaim to NCP filing (original filing) was dismissed. Affidavits are filed by staff, contractors and neighbors to bolster request to have access to building granted for purpose of securing property. Received notice that an attorney entered his appearance as counsel for "defendants" however, the "defendants" were not identified.
December 2023	At hearing for access to property the "defendants" attorney requested more time to identify who he represents as well as to respond to this hearing. Both were granted. Opposing party files motion opposing our request to access the property. Received notice that our initial claim asserting our right to the property was dismissed on the grounds they the DC court did not have jurisdiction.
January 2024	Motion to have dismissal reconsidered was filed. Hearing requesting access to property was cancelled. Notice that an order was forthcoming was received.
February 2024	Metro Police Department begins calling NCP regarding complaints from neighbors about activity at property. Received Department of Buildings notice that property has been fined because a door has been kicked in. Motion to reconsider our claim asserting NCP right to the property was granted. Court requested we refile all previous motions to date.
March 2024	Send letter to DOB outlining our position as owner of the property and requesting all outstanding invoices so they can be cured. Received notice that motion to serve defendants and unknown persons by publication was approved.

	Church Member A filed motion to intervene in our claim as well as a counterclaim asserting his right to the property.
	Church Member A files motions opposing service by publication and our request to access the property. NCP filed responses to both.
April 2024	Motion allowing NCP access to the property for purposes of securing it is granted. Order placed some conditions on any repairs that might be done. Motion denying Church Member A's request to intervene in NCP's claim to the property was denied. A deadline of May 8th was set for filings related to the Property Claim case.
June 2024	Hearing in the case resulted in additional time for the opposing party to submit answers.
July 2024	Church Member A filed an additional counterclaim stating he had been appointed as a Trustee. Opposing counsel submitted filing withdrawing himself from case. The defendant was given time to file an answer to his filing.
August 2024	NCP files witness list ahead of hearing. Our motion to strike Church Member A's response and counter claim was granted.
September 2024	Church Member A filed motion to have his answer and counterclaim reconsidered.
October 2024	Court denies Church Member A's request for reconsideration.
November 2024	Church Member A files appeal of denial of his request for reconsideration. NCP files motion of default to advance Property Claim case. Opposing counsel was granted permission to withdraw.
December 2024	Hearing on the NCP's default motion is continued until late January.
January 2025	Motion filed by Church Member A appealing their counsel's withdrawal from the case was denied. Work to secure property is completed. Cost of this work is \$56,282.70. All appeals by Church Member A are denied.

	Fire breaks out on porch of the church. Minimal damage was done. Fire did not breach into the interior. NCP staff visit property to assess damage from fire.
February 2025	At hearing, NCP's motion of default was granted; however, order had to be amended to include both the Church and Trustees.
March 2025	NCP Files motion for judgement. NCP receives order granting judgement.
April 2025	Church Member A filed motion appealing judgement. Despite missing the filing deadline, DC Court of Appeals agrees to hear the case.
May 2025	NCP files to record deed in its name, based on the Judgement Order. DC Court of Appeals issues Order to Show Cause to Church Member A. He has 20 days to respond.
June 2025	Recorder of Deed rejects NCP Deed because they are requiring NCP to pay recordation and transfer taxes (despite judgement order stating these fees were not applicable in this case). Leadership Council passes the following motion allowing NCP to pay recording fees relating to recording deed in NCP's name: <i>That the Leadership Council AUTHORIZE the expenditure of \$164,108.10 from the Office Fund for the full amount of the fees related to recording the deed for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, with the funds to be reimbursed to the Office Fund when either the fees are refunded or the property sells, whichever happens first.</i>
July 2025	Church Member A does not file a response to Show Cause Order from DC Court of Appeals; however, DC Court of Appeals rules to allow the appeal to go forward without response from Church Member A.
August 2025	NCP is finally able to obtain liability only insurance on property.
February 2026	Church Member A failed to submit his brief and appendix as required to advance his appeal.
March 2026	Court of Appeals dismisses case. No motions to vacate order or reconsider were filed within the deadline. Property Claim case concludes.

Not included in this timeline are the multiple vacancy tax exemption filings and appeals that occurred to keep the property current on property taxes and the work done with Department of Building to cure fines related to activity at the property.

The Presbytery approved this Motion.

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Katie Murchison-Ross the Chair of the Nominating Committee to present the Motion of Election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator.

Moderator Littlejohn states that the motions will be voted upon separately.

ACTION ITEM #2

Nominating Committee – Election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator

The committee nominates **Rev. Rachel Vaagenes** (Capitol Hill) to be Moderator of the National Capital Presbytery for 2026-2027.

The committee nominates **Elder Marco Grimaldo** (Church of the Pilgrims) to be Vice Moderator of the National Capital Presbytery for 2026-2027.

Biographies of Nominees



2026-2027 Moderator – Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes (she/her) has been active in NCP for nearly 16 years, serving at Georgetown Presbyterian for 10 years and currently at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church. This past year has been a privilege serving as Vice Moderator and on Leadership Council, and preparing for GA. Previously, she served on the Nominating Committee (for as long as Jacob labored in Laban's fields) and has also served on MCC, contributed to the refugee network, supported dismantling racism efforts, and participated in NCP Pride events. Having heard the call to ministry, Rachel left Los Angeles and her dream of becoming an extra in Hallmark movies to attend seminary in New Jersey. She ended up in DC and has loved it ever since. She is bisexual and cares deeply about ensuring everyone feels welcome and knows they are loved by God! Rachel lives in Glover Park with her librarian husband Adrian; their two teen daughters, Maewynn and Evangeline; dogs Ladybird and Lucy; and 100 rescued houseplants.



2026-2027 Vice Moderator – Elder Marco A. Grimaldo is a Ruling Elder at Church of the Pilgrims. Marco has served on various committees and boards of National Capital Presbytery, including the first anti-racism team and currently the Mission Coordinating Committee. He has also served on General Assembly committees at the denominational level and on the boards of the Presbyterian AIDS network, the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, More Light Presbyterians, and the Virginia Coalition for Immigrants' Rights. In his professional life, Marco works at Bread for the World as a strategist for national church partners and Latino communities. Marco is honored to be nominated to this role and shares that, in his experience moderating various committees and church groups in the past, "I have come to believe that very rarely is it the role of the moderator to solve the problem. Far more often, the most important next step is to answer the question, 'What will we do to move forward?' Marco hopes to use his service as vice-moderator of the presbytery to continue living into his life motto, "be of good service."

These Motions are Approved by the Presbytery. Moderator Littlejohn recognized the Rev. Juli Wilson-Black who served on the Stated Clerk Search Committee to present the motion of the Parliamentary role of Stated Clerk.

ACTION ITEM #3

Stated Clerk Search Committee: Election of NCP Stated Clerk

Motion: To approve the Stated Clerk Search Committee's nomination of Rev. Alex Evangelista as Stated Clerk of National Capital Presbytery for a term of five years beginning June 15, 2026.

Dear NCP,

The Stated Clerk Nominating Committee is pleased to present our candidate for Stated Clerk to the Presbytery at the May 19, 2026 meeting. Rev. Alex Evangelista brings a broad background in ministry and leadership in councils of the PC(USA), having served churches, small and large, in the Presbytery of Philadelphia and Peace River. He served as Assistant Clerk in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, chaired the Presbytery of Philadelphia's Bills and Overtures committee, and currently serves on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, a permanent committee of the General Assembly. Alex combines imagination with critical thinking and close attention to detail, integrates pastoral sensitivity with adherence to polity, and takes leadership initiative while forming strong relationships with colleagues.



A native Spanish speaker, Rev. Evangelista graduated from Azusa Pacific University before moving across the country to study for his Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership Studies at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Our committee was impressed by Alex's demonstrated ability to fairly apply our polity in contested situations, as a pastor and presbyter, having navigated conflict with care in his own congregation and having communicated and interpreted our Constitution at the Presbytery and GA levels. We were also impressed by Alex's collaborative leadership approach to solving complex problems. In one former congregation, The Church on the Mall in Philadelphia, Alex led a process of community listening and engagement that resulted in the opening of a volunteer-run emergency shelter for unhoused neighbors, and an affordable after-school childcare in the church.

Alex's enthusiastic references described him as an excellent listener, passionate about polity, with a great love of the church and its people. As one said, "I have seen him put a lot of thought

and intentionality into a session meeting's learning moments in order to connect the current issues the elders are facing with a Bible study, case study, or brainstorming session.”

A common refrain among his references was that Alex seeks ways to get to “yes” within the framework of our polity and responds with empathy when that is not possible. One experienced Stated Clerk said, “Alex listens for the issue behind a request and tries to find the means for carrying out the mission of God to help it happen, or to help the people involved understand if what they seek will not fit within our framework.” As Alex himself says, “I see the Book of Order as a gift for thriving, a theological and constitutional resource that forms trust, clarifies purpose, encourages holy risk, and equips congregations to pursue mission with courage and joy!”

Our committee is delighted to nominate Rev. Alex Evangelista for the approval of the Presbytery to become our next Stated Clerk.

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

Moderator Littlejohn encouraged the Presbytery to join in Hymn-sing together.

The Moderator offered a prayer; Next, They invited Vice-Moderator Vaagenes up to open Worship. Moderator Littlejohn finished worship with engagement.

Moderator Littlejohn invited up the General Assembly Commissioners to be Commissioned and the Co-Acting Stated Clerk, Rev. John Molina-Moore performs the Commissioning ceremony.

Commissioning of GA commissioners

- Elder Jesy Littlejohn (Oaklands)
- Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes (Capitol Hill)
- Elder Kristin Ford (New York Ave)
- Elder Beverly Johnson (Lewinsville)
- Elder Jacquelyn Moore (Sargent Memorial)
- Rev. Elizabeth Brookens-Sturman (Retired)
- Rev. David Douthett (Catocin)
- Rev. Emma Horn (Immanuel)
- Sofia Turkman (YAAD) (Saint Mark)

The Presbytery approved these individuals’ commissioning and agreed to support them.

Rev. Molina-Moore offers a prayer for the Commissioners and the work set out before them.

The Presbytery was invited to sing the hymn, Love, Divine, All Loves Excelling.

The Presbytery partook of the Lord’s Supper and enjoyed singing together, I Come With Joy.

There was no ‘New Business’ at the 327th Stated Meeting.

Moderator Jesy Littlejohn gave a beautiful and witty charge and blessing to the Presbytery about 'Hope' -bone-deep hope. They spoke about grieving with Muslim Brothers and Sisters for injustices done against them.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.



**NATIONAL CAPITAL
PRESBYTERY**

Stated Meeting National Capital Presbytery September 22, 2026

Presbytery Reports

The reports in this section contain information about the work undertaken by the Presbytery's committees, commissions, and officers. Items requiring action by the Presbytery have been included in the separate Presbytery Packet document.

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WELCOME TO NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESBYTERY!

Introductions at the September 22, 2026 Stated Meeting



Rev. Dr. Janel Dixon has recently been called to serve as Pastor of **Silver Spring Presbyterian Church**. A pastor, preacher, teacher, spiritual director, and leader, she brings more than three decades of ministry experience to this new call. Previously, Dr. Dixon served for 13 years as Pastor of Cedar Park Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and nearly 15 years as Pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church in Wilson, North Carolina. She also served as Program Associate for Cultivating Enough in the Care of Clergy and as Moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia during its 300th Anniversary year. Dr. Dixon earned degrees from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, now Palmer Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership Development from Princeton Theological Seminary. She also holds a certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Sisters of Mercy at Cranaleith Spiritual Center. A published writer and devoted mentor, her ministry is rooted in wisdom, compassion, and a deep love for Christ and the Church. She is the wife of Calvin Lynn Dixon and the mother of Samira Lynn Dixon and Tai-Durell Dixon.

Fun fact: She adores her pet turtle, Nemo, and loves to dance! Reach out to Dr. Dixon [here](#).



Rev. Dr. Aram Feinberg recently relocated to Silver Spring, MD, to be closer to family. A cradle-born Presbyterian who grew up as a “PK” (the kind who prayed to the Good Lord she’d never become a pastor), Aram taught fifth grade before beginning her theological education at Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv). She is also an alum of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA (MACE) and Union Theological Seminary in New York (PhD), where she served as the director of family ministries at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. She was ordained and installed as the associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, VA, before serving as the interim head of staff at Bayside Presbyterian in Virginia Beach. She regularly teaches mission & evangelism for the Leadership Institute at Union Presbyterian Seminary and contributes to d365 and the *Presbyterian Outlook*, writing book reviews she hopes will help the ever-pursuing reader.

Given a choice between officiating a wedding or presiding a funeral, she would choose the latter. She does her best sermonating at a local watering hole, has too many books on her nightstand, and enjoys being a pastor. While never thrilled about the boring traffic, Aram and her husband are grateful to return to the DMV area where they met and where extended family is all hands on deck for their baby boy. (God bless grandparents!) Reach out to Dr. Feinberg [here](#).



Newly ordained, **Rev. Diane Maloney** is the Associate Pastor for Youth at **Burke Presbyterian Church**. She has been serving churches in Northern Virginia, Tennessee, and New Jersey for over 10 years. Diane is originally from New Jersey, so she has incredibly high standards for pizza and bagels. On her way to ordination, Diane completed coursework at Memphis Theological Seminary as well as Pittsburgh and Dubuque Theological Seminaries. Diane is married to Paige Bach, who serves Providence Presbyterian Church in Fairfax as their Director of Next Generation Ministry. Together they live in Fairfax with their mini goldendoodle Kettle Corn (a regular attendee of the NCP continuing ed retreat) and their one-eyed cat, PAL short for President Abraham Lincoln. Diane is also an avid fan of the tv show *Survivor* having seen every episode in its 50 (!) seasons! Reach out to Diane [here](#).

Report From the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property

9/14/2026

Important Information for Churches

G-4.0206 Selling, Encumbering, or Leasing Church Property from the Book of Order

a. Selling or Encumbering Congregational Property

A congregation shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

b. Leasing Congregational Property

A congregation shall not lease its real property used for purposes of worship, or lease for more than five years any of its other real property, without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

All leases executed by NCP Sessions must contain the following language:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this Lease/License to the contrary, in the event that the Landlord as a religious organization is dissolved, Lessee or the National Capital Presbytery may terminate this Lease/License, provided that notice of such dissolution is provided to Lessee at least ninety (90) days prior to the anticipated date of dissolution, and (ii) the Lease/License shall not terminate for ninety (90) days after the date of such dissolution unless otherwise agreed by the Parties."

The Presbytery has empowered the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property with the powers of an Administrative Commission to consider and approve requests from churches to lease, sell or encumber the real property of a church. Any action in this regard by a congregation without the Presbytery's permission will not be recognized as legally valid.

If your church is considering leasing, selling, or encumbering real property please contact the Senior Director of Finance & Operations, Heather Deacon, hdeacon@thepresbytery.org.

No action has been taken since our last report.

Committee/Commission on Ministry (COM)
REPORT to Presbytery for September 22, 2026

Exams

COM approved and sustained the following Examinations:

Mills, Hannah - [Exam: 5/15/2026; CC: 6/16/26]

Dixon, Janel - [Exam 7/9/2026; CC:8/19/2026]

Feinberg, Aram - [Exam: 8/12/26; CC: 8/19/2026]

Marshall, Emma - [Exam:7/15/2026 ; CC: 8/19/2026]

Kim, Goomin – [Exam: 8/19/2026; CC: 8/19/2026]

Rosenson, Katie - [Exam:6/18/2026; CC: 8/19/2026]

Moore, Connie - [Exam:7/22/26; CC: 8/19/2026]

Maloney, Diane -[Exam: 8/28/2026; CC:8/28/2026]

Laryea, Beatrice - [Exam:6/7/26; CC: 6/16/2026]

Butler, Jennifer - [Exam:5/4/2026; CC:6/16/2026]

Contracts/Terms of Call

Immanuel/Moorhead- Approved the Stated Supply Contract between the Session of Immanuel Presbyterian Church and Rev. Blair Moorehead for a period of one year; beginning May 1, 2026, and ending April 30th, 2027. [CTC: 6/4/2026]

Christ the King/Laryea-Approved the Commissioned Ruling Elder Contract between the Session of Christ the King Presbyterian Church and Elder Beatrice Laryea. [CTC:6/4/2026]

Rockville/Butler-Approved the Stated Supply Contract between the Session of Rockville Presbyterian Church and Rev. Jennifer Butler. [CTC: 9/3/2026]

Redeemer/Morse-Approved the Stated Supply Contract between the Session of Church of the Redeemer and the Rev. Dr. Sterling Morse for the period of September 1st, 2026, to August 31st, 2027. [CTC: 9/3/2026]

APNC/PNCs

OPMH- Approved Old Presbyterian Meeting House to form an Associate Pastoral Nomination Committee to fill their vacant Associate Pastor role. [9/3/2026]

Sabbaticals

Rev. Tara Spuhler McCabe- Approved the Sabbatical Request for Rev. Tara Spuhler McCabe had her sabbatical request approved for July 17th – October 17th, 2026.

[TECN: May 11th, 2026]

Moderator Appointments

Rev. Carla Gorrell- approved Rev. Carla Gorrell moderated Session meeting for Westminster DC. [CTC:9/3/2026; CC: 9/15/2026]

Rev. Alex Evangelista- ratified Rev. Alex Evangelista moderated a congregational meeting on 09/02 at Rockville Presbyterian Church [CTC:9/3/2026; CC:9/15.2026]

Rev. Emilee Williams- Approved Rev. Emilee Williams to moderate the congregational meeting on 09/27 at Fairfax Presbyterian Church

Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs)

Approved waiving the requirement of an internship for CRE Candidate, William Bennett; to request William Bennett to take a polity course/study and require a reformed theology course to satisfy the proof of coursework for the CRE process. [CTC: Sept. 3, 2026; CC: Sept. 15, 2026]

Approved the Commissioning of Beatrice Laryea as Commissioned Ruling Elder to serve Christ the King Presbyterian Church. [CTC:6/4/2026]

Reviewed and approved the Commissioned Ruling Elder Application for Laura Brooks to begin the process of becoming a CRE. [CTC:9/3/2026]

Ordinations/Installations

Diane Maloney- COM Approved the Ordination and Installation of Diane Maloney on the confirmed date of August 30, 2026, at 3pm, at Burke Presbyterian Church. The Commission that was dismissed at the end of the worship service.

COM Motions Approved

1. Immanuel/ Horn - Sustained the Session of Immanuel Presbyterian Church's exception request to the National Capital Presbytery's policy to install the Rev. Emma Horn as

Associate Pastor of Children and Youth Ministry, approved by the Session July 16th, 2026.
[CTC: 9/3/2026]

2. Saint Mark - Pending the receiving of an official request from Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, we approve St. Mark's Presbyterian search for a Stated Supply position. [CTC: 9/3/2026]
3. Compensation: Approved the 2027 Annual Addendum to the NCP Compensation and Personnel Policy for Pastors, pending editorial changes made by Alex Evangelista per our conversation. [CTC:9/3/2026; CC: 9/4/2026]
4. Approved the updated Pastor Salary Report form for 2027. [CTC: 9/3/2027]

Leadership Council Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2026 at 12:30 pm
Via Zoom

<https://thepresbytery.zoom.us/j/82062173966?pwd=8FsFTeeC6xxv9w8GVm6VXM0YDlCrCM.>

1

Leadership Council Members Present: David Douthett, Jeri Fields (Chair), Lou Durden, Diane Walton Hendricks, Shani McIlwain, Leslie Klingensmith, Shelby Harasty

Leadership Council Members Excused: Mary Rogers, Rachel Vaagenes

Presbytery Staff: Dina Bickel, Heather Deacon, John Molina-Moore, Tara Spuhler McCabe, and Tempest Davis

Guests: Katie Murchison Ross, and Blake Collins

Sent by the Triune God to be agents of salvation, reconciliation, and justice, we empower and challenge our congregations to be Missional, Pastoral and Prophetic

12:35 Called to Order

Jeri Fields

Lighting of the Christ Candle to Initiate Worship and the Work Set Out Before Us

- Approve LC Meeting Minutes with updates from May 6th and May 12th follow-up meeting.
- Approve the Docket for June 3rd, 2026

Approved by the Leadership Council

12:35 pm Devotion

Jesy Littlejohn

Moderator Littlejohn wishes everyone a ‘Happy Pride!’ They lift up the fact that the past Sunday, May 31st, 2026 was Trinity Sunday. The sermon at Their church focused on the passage of 2 Corinthians and the Creation story. How our understanding of Creation can shape the way we think about the Trinity ‘how can One be all Three; or Three be One?’. We are drawn to the binary spaces that God made day or night, land and sea, light and dark. Moderator Littlejohn made the comparison of the in-between spaces (dusk and dawn, shadows, shade, wetlands and marshes) of Creation in how They can see how Their identity is reflected in the Imago Dei. They celebrate the progress that has been made. Moderator Littlejohn also pays homage to all of the people whose lives has been taken or harmed in any way in the LGBTQIA+ community. They lift the fact that they will be preaching three places this month for the churches’ Pride services and prayerfully holding onto hope with the tension that remains. They recite a poem called “The Prayer

and the Shadow” by Robert Munson.

12:40 pm Presbytery Evaluations

Jesy Littlejohn

12:45 pm 2026 Annual Committee Reports

- Administrative Commission on Congregational Property (ACCP)
- Bills and Overtures (BO)
- Budget & Finance (B&F)
- Committee on Ministry (COM)
- Committee on Representation (COR)
- Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
- Investment Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Personnel Committee

Presentation by Katie Murchison Ross

Jeri Fields

Leadership Council Approved the Reports with Sincere Gratitude

1:05 pm Action Items:

Leadership Council: Motion for Approval of CPM Scholarships (2026–2027)

MOTION from CPM's Scholarship Sub-Committee: Allocate \$25,000 in scholarship funds to the following Inquirers and Candidates under care of CPM:

- Jennifer Breece - \$1,500
- Grace Atanga-Fuh - \$1,500
- Briana Stewart - \$1, 500
- Briana Windhausen - \$1,500
- Hannah Donoghue - \$4,000
- Connie Moore - \$4,000
- Jiseong Son - \$4,000
- Erin Sanzero - \$7,000

Rationale: CPM's 2026 scholarship budget is \$48,696.00. Payments are planned to be allocated twice this year (first in June and again in November). This first cycle totals \$25,000, leaving \$23,696 for the fall. Based on the needs, requests and additional information provided in the applications received, the Scholarship Team discerned to grant funds in three tiers: \$1,500; \$4,000; and \$7,000. Everyone who applied is receiving scholarship assistance.

Blake Collins Co-Chair of CPM

Leadership Council Approved this Motion.

1:10 pm Garden Memorial Property Team Presentation on Allocation of Property Sale Proceeds
Garden Memorial Property Team

1:25 pm Updates:

- Rev. Tara Spuhler McCabe Sabbatical
- Lilly Grant

John Molina-Moore

1:35 New Business:

Jeri Fields

1:45 Closing Prayer

Diane Walton Hendricks

Meeting Adjourned at 1:46 pm

National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position Summary
July 31

	2026	2025
Assets		
Cash		
Presbytery Cash	\$ 686,636.16	\$ 677,114.19
General Directors Cash	859,695.50	853,042.85
Receiving Center Cash	232,869.78	230,025.32
Total Cash	<u>1,779,201.44</u>	<u>1,760,182.36</u>
Prepaid Expense	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Investments		
Presbytery	282,536.38	275,504.79
Garden	12,696.63	10,812.35
General Directors	233,720.05	199,162.27
PM	180,831.47	175,445.91
Resurrection	6,154,800.71	5,419,173.60
Other	1,432,369.95	1,553,059.41
Church Funds	7,559,062.23	7,058,899.67
New Growth	1,734,804.39	2,024,656.16
Scholarships	1,354,665.66	1,233,863.77
Total Investments	<u>18,945,487.47</u>	<u>17,950,577.93</u>
Receivables		
Other Receivables	11,186.82	25,663.90
General Directors - Loans Receivable	146,313.47	149,726.36
PCUSA - Mortgage Grants Receivable	34,300.00	34,300.00
Total Receivables	<u>191,800.29</u>	<u>209,690.26</u>
Fixed Assets	<u>26,341.04</u>	<u>26,341.04</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 20,942,830.24</u>	<u>\$ 19,946,791.59</u>
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ -	\$ -
Taxes Payable	6,812.83	6,848.98
Annuity	1,368.36	517.62
Insurance Payable	-	3,455.20
FSA Payable	(10,586.33)	9,118.97
Total Current Liabilities	<u>(2,405.14)</u>	<u>19,940.77</u>
Other Liabilities		
Funds Held for Arlington - Presby Foundation	7,431,536.92	6,932,038.72
Funds Held - Arlington Collateral	102,010.75	101,346.39
Total Other Liabilities	<u>7,533,547.67</u>	<u>7,033,385.11</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>7,531,142.53</u>	<u>7,053,325.88</u>



National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position Summary
July 31

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Net Assets		
With Donor Restrictions	1,900,664.13	1,502,361.54
Without Donor Restrictions		
Board Designated	1,091,253.30	1,128,435.70
Prior Years' Net Balance	10,248,945.29	10,063,009.07
Current Year Net Balance	170,824.99	199,659.40
Total Without Donor Restrictions	<u>11,511,023.58</u>	<u>11,391,104.17</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>13,411,687.71</u>	<u>12,893,465.71</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>\$ 20,942,830.24</u>	<u>\$ 19,946,791.59</u>

Cash Available for General Operations

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 20,724,688.91	\$ 19,710,760.29
Less:		
Current Liabilities	(2,405.14)	19,940.77
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	1,900,664.13	1,502,361.54
Net Assets With Board Designations	1,091,253.30	1,128,435.70
Total Unavailable	<u>2,989,512.29</u>	<u>2,650,738.01</u>
Total Cash Available for General Operations	<u>\$ 17,735,176.62</u>	<u>\$ 17,060,022.28</u>



National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Activities Summary
For the 7 Months Ending July 31, 2026

	Current Month Actual	Year-to-Date Actual	Annual Budget	Budget Remaining	YTD Actual as % Annual Budget
OPERATING					
Income					
Operating Income	\$ 106,401	\$ 851,557	\$ 1,138,468	\$ 286,911	75%
Transfers - Non-Revenue	-	103,696	158,696	55,000	65%
Total OPERATING ACTIVITY Income	106,401	955,253	1,297,164	341,911	74%
Expenses					
Per Capita / Assessments	12,490	177,088	314,382	137,294	56%
Office Expense	11,979	75,753	134,735	58,982	56%
Commission on Preparation for Ministry	(559)	28,201	59,696	31,495	47%
Care Team	-	650	3,000	2,350	22%
Transitions Team	(86)	-	-	-	N/A
Relations Team	-	-	3,500	3,500	0%
Other	86	964	4,500	3,536	21%
Middle Governing Body	2,310	45,327	114,295	68,968	40%
Administrative Staff Costs	16,684	258,277	663,070	404,793	39%
Total Operating Expenses	42,903	586,260	1,297,179	710,919	45%
Change in Operating Net Balance	63,497	368,993	(15)	(369,007)	N/A
MISSIONS					
Income					
Missions Income	(92,964)	439,421	992,964	553,544	44%
Expenses					
Mission Coordination Committee	1,256	9,184	24,000	14,816	38%
Grants - General	(63)	43,979	95,000	51,021	46%
Grants - Specific	5,640	228,320	592,212	363,892	39%
Mission Staff Costs	69,087	211,314	281,752	70,438	75%
Total Operating Expenses	75,920	492,797	992,964	500,167	50%
Change in Missions Net Balance	(168,884)	(53,377)	-	(500,167)	N/A
OTHER ACTIVITIES					
Other Activities Income	-	140	-	(140)	N/A
Other Investment Income	236,604	564,238	-	(564,238)	N/A
Other Activities Expense	(95,916)	709,169	-	(709,169)	N/A
Change in Other Activities Net Balance	332,520	(144,791)	-	144,791	N/A
Combined Change in Net Balance	\$ 227,134	\$ 170,825	\$ (15)	\$ (724,383)	N/A

Report from the Bills and Overture Committee

Reflections from the 227th General Assembly

NCP Family in Christ,

The following pages provide a series of reflections from our new Stated Clerk, the commissioners, and the delegates whom National Capital Presbytery sent to the 227th General Assembly of the PC(USA) in Milwaukee. You will find their descriptions vary in their formats, just as each of our team had varied experiences. For those who have not been to GA, it is an inspiring and uplifting experience. Each person will have an experience that is their own. I have been honored to attend two and a half GAs myself: overture advocate and alternate in 2018 in St. Louis, Commissioner to the 2020 GA that was online from Baltimore due to COVID (the ½ GA), and Commissioner to the 2022 GA in Salt Lake City. I have also served for the last six years as your Bills and Overtures chair since 2020. As I look forward to handing over the reins to Elder Lou Durden, my final report to the Presbytery comes in this compilation of experiences from those who represented NCP at the 227th GA in Milwaukee this summer.

Before their thoughts, I'll give a quick report on those items NCP voted on prior to GA 227. Early this year, sessions of two of our churches proposed that NCP concur with four overtures to GA 227. While concurrences are no longer required for overtures to reach GA for decision, they serve as votes of support from Presbyteries. Those four overtures were:

- Overture 003/GEN-01, "On Confession, Repentance and Renewed Theological Engagement Regarding HIV/AIDS and Human Sexuality" (Gender and Sexuality Justice Committee)
- Overture 034/CLJ-02, "On Changing Course for a Green Future" (Climate and Environmental Justice Committee)
- Overture 035/CLJ-03, "On Establishing the Green Future Fund" (Climate and Environmental Justice Committee)
- Overture 036/CLJ-04, "On Regenerative Farming" (Climate and Environmental Justice Committee)

All four of these overtures were passed by their committees, recommended for inclusion in the consent agenda, and passed as part of the consent agenda. This was especially surprising for CLJ-02, "On Changing Course for a Green Future" as similar overtures for the PC(USA) to divest from fossil fuels have been proposed to the GA since the 222nd GA in Portland in 2016. Through the amazing work of the Holy Spirit, divestment was passed whole-heartedly with the support of both Mission Responsibility Through Investment and the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy.

Overview from Stated Clerk Rev. Alex Evangelista:

From June 22nd to July 2nd, National Capital Presbytery sent a remarkable group of commissioners and delegates to the 227th General Assembly of the PC(USA) in Milwaukee, gathered under the theme “Persevering Toward Wholeness.” Commissioners from our presbytery were ruling elders Beverly Johnson, Jackie Moore, Kristin Ford, and Jesy Littlejohn; teaching elders David Douthett, Emma Horn, Elizabeth Brookens, and Rachel Vaagenes; Theological Student Advisory Delegate Erin Sanzero (Duke Divinity School); and Young Adult Advisory Delegate Sofia Turkman. Our General Presbyter, John Molina-Moore, was there as well, and I had the honor of being there too, both as your brand-new Stated Clerk and as a corresponding member through my service on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. I spent much of my time resourcing the Theological Education and Ordination Committee, and I was grateful for a few chances to resource the wider assembly as well.

As my first reflection to this presbytery, I want to lift the reflections of the commissioners who carried our presbytery’s voice into that room. I asked each of them what stayed with them, and here is some of what they shared! (Note: I shared with commissioners that their quotes may be used but that I would not name them directly)

For several, this was their first General Assembly and the wonder of it came through clearly. One commissioner called it a “great learning experience” and said they felt “so glad AND HONORED to be counted among the Commissioners representing NCP.” Another found themselves amazed by the “obvious passion exhibited, graciously, by participants,” alongside the discovery that “PCUSA would hands down win an acronym contest with the US Army.” Presbyterians do love our acronyms, ha!

One of our commissioners reflected on the weight and the gift of the work together. They wrote about feeling “honored to represent NCP and engage with elders from around the globe in the effort to discern God’s will on very weighty matters,” and named the NCP commissioner team itself as one of their gifts from the week, an “amazing array of spiritual gifts, experience and deeply held faith,” with a sense of humor they called stellar.

Another commissioner described the assembly as “both beautiful and heartbreaking,” shaped by how many of the decisions touched the lived experiences of people they love. Their most memorable moment came in the details of the work itself: offering the first “amendment to an amendment” on the plenary floor, a deeply Presbyterian act of getting one word, “shall,” into the place it needed to be!

And yes, there is deeper work still ahead of us as a church. One commissioner shared, “there are more things that unite us than divide us,” even as “we must persevere towards wholeness so that we may see flourishing and liberation of all creation.” Another found hope in the process itself, in watching discernment happen across a large and diverse body. The assembly “made the PCUSA richer and also closer knit” for them, through the new friendships and unexpected common ground found there. This diversity includes the young people in our midst, as a commissioner called it a “very fulfilling experience” to learn how youth participate directly in the life of the church, and hopes to see young people stay involved in the presbytery and future assemblies. One commissioner summed up the whole experience about as honestly as one could,

sharing that General Assembly is “hard, tiring, sometimes mind-numbing – but also joyful, exhilarating, and remarkably hopeful.”

Indeed, as NCP Presbytery Member, Denise Anderson (Corresponding Member, Previous Co-Moderator of General Assembly) offered a reflective word that has stayed with me. She described learning that she does not always need to use her own voice, that when the system is working, “the Spirit speaks to the body,” and often someone else says what needed to be said before she gets the chance. “It’s a beautiful reminder,” she wrote, “that God is in charge.” Amen!

Reading through these reflections together, what strikes me most is not any single theme but the range itself. First timers and veterans, ruling and teaching elders, all describing a week in such different ways. That range feels worth naming. The church we serve together is not one voice but many, and General Assembly asks all of them to sit in the same room and discern together, all for the glory of God. As your new Stated Clerk, still learning the shape of this presbytery, I find comfort in this. Whatever comes back to us in the amendments ahead, I trust we can meet in the same way: honestly, prayerfully, and *together*.

I want to name – and join me in thanking – each of them: Elizabeth Brookens, Beverly Johnson, David Douthett, Emma Horn, Jesy Littlejohn, Jackie Moore, Kristin Ford, Rachel Vaagenes, Erin Sanzero, and Sofia Turkman, along with Shani McIlwain, Denise Anderson and John Molina-Moore, for the way they carried National Capital Presbytery into General Assembly. General Assembly asks a lot of the people who attend it and these reflections tell me our presbytery sent people who gave a lot and received a lot in return!

A separate Stated Clerk Advisory Letter will follow soon, which will walk through the amendments coming back to our presbytery for a vote and what each would mean if approved. Also in this NCP *NOW!*, you’ll also find some selected highlights and short overviews of other General Assembly action items that I find helpful for further study. For now, I simply want to say thank you, to God for this church and to the people who represented us so well!

Highlights and Short Overviews of General Assembly Action Items by Rev. Alex Evangelista

The 227th General Assembly discerned their faithful responses to many issues and opportunities facing the church, and how the church may interact with the larger world. While some of these highlights and overviews may also be found in resources from the PCUSA website or from the *Presbyterian Outlook*, I offer these selected highlights and short descriptions for your further study. I invite you to click the PC-Biz links, which will take you to the Business Item and include the (amended) approved action and the rationale offered by the sponsoring body. Some of the action items have comments and resources attached.

Before diving into the highlights, I want to name an important distinction. The action items I highlight below include statements or policies, meaning the General Assembly is speaking on its own behalf and on behalf of the commissioners gathered for the 227th General Assembly. These statements do important work: they authorize entities like the [*Office of Public Witness*](#) to advocate using that language on the church’s behalf, since the Office does not speak on issues the Assembly has not addressed. *Yet*, a General Assembly statement is not binding upon any church,

member, or council. It does not mandate agreement, and it does not infringe on anyone's freedom of conscience. ***Rather***, these statements can serve as resources, something a session may use for adult education, congregational reflection, or discernment about their own convictions. *This is different* from amendments to the Book of Order, which require a vote by a majority of presbyteries before taking effect, and which do carry constitutional weight if approved.

Below, I highlight these action items, and a future Advisory Letter will share information on amendments that require our presbytery's discernment and hold constitutional weight.

Below are some highlights:

- GEN-09 - Instructing the development of a comprehensive theological framework and study guide that addresses human sexuality and gender, which reflects our denomination's commitment to full inclusion of all people. <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001501>
- GAO-01 & 02 - Approving the 2028 General Assembly to be held in Puerto Rico (<https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001535>) and committing to a fully in-person assembly in 2030 (<https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001435>)
- RUS-07 - A Social Witness Policy to "[Standing Against White Christian Nationalism](https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001498)". This action item includes urging "all leaders and members of the PC(USA) to familiarize themselves with ideology, practices, and goals of white Christian nationalism."
 - Note: this is a social witness policy (see the distinction above) and is different from RUS-01, which proposes an amendment to F-1.0305 and will require presbytery ratification <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001414>.
- RIW-01 - Authorizing a commission to study the dismissal of PC(USA) mission co-workers, with the intent of transparency and reconciliation <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001417>
- RIW-04 - Naming Israel's war in Gaza a genocide and how the church may respond <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001425>
- RUS-11 - Honoring the life of Renee Nicole Good, a Presbyterian that was killed in Minneapolis, and acknowledging all those killed at the hands of ICE <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001576>
- ORD-14 - Creating a Korean American Roundtable for the renewal of the Korean American church's mission in our denomination <https://myga.pc-biz.org/search/3001532>

These are just a few of many actions taken by the 227th General Assembly. Commissioners and Advisory delegates worked long and hard on their faithful response, and we are thankful for them!

If you have any questions about any other action items, please do not hesitate to reach out. I look forward to sharing more with you all soon, especially as we prepare to discern our action on proposed amendments.

In Christ,

Alex Evangelista

Initial thoughts from Emma Horn

From my committee Committee on Theological Education and Ordination (CTEO):

ORD 07: This was our biggest item of business and includes lots of different aspects. The one aspect that feels important to me to lift up is the ordination exam portfolio piece. While our presbytery is already open hearted about the ordination process and alternative exams, this is a really big change for a lot of presbyteries.

ORD 03: Collaborative Ministries. I'm excited about the possibilities of how this will play out. It's really just in the initial stages right now, so there isn't a whole lot to say yet.

From other committees:

CLJ 01: Divestment (and other related pieces) It feels important to mention this piece because not only did the body vote to divest but that they did so within the consent agenda, which is a huge change from the way that these environmental justice pieces have gone at GA in the past.

The work of the RUS committee just as a whole made some huge stands, and the body voted to lean into some very justice centered language and work.

GEN 06, whose language I've pasted here. **Direct the Unified Agency to develop and implement an additional mechanism in the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) for the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) that:**

1. **Allows congregations to indicate their openness and readiness to call an LGBTQIA+ candidate, and**
2. **Allows any candidate to view the congregational response about their openness and readiness to call an LGBTQIA+ candidate and filter search results by those responses.**
3. **Is developed in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity and organizations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that have demonstrated experience in LGBTQIA+ education and accompaniment in the call process.**

Serving as a Ruling Elder Commissioner to the 227th PCUSA General Assembly

(as prepared for New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, July 2026)

Kristin Ford

Earlier this summer, I had the privilege of representing New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and National Capital Presbytery at the 227th [General Assembly](#) of the Presbyterian Church (USA), along with a group of other commissioners and advisory delegates. Each presbytery sends a delegation of ruling elders as well as pastors (teaching elders) to consider and vote on the business of the church, as well as worship together.

General Assembly is a special time, of gathering alongside hundreds of other Presbyterians for worship and discernment, and carrying out the governance of the church – making decisions collectively about the church.

Each commissioner and advisory delegate was assigned to a committee and we reviewed the business assigned to our committee in advance, then had three days of virtual meetings to engage in our committee work and make recommendations to the whole assembly. A few days later, we all traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where we met in-person for five days for the plenary portion of our work.

General Assembly Relationships Committee

I served on the General Assembly Relationships committee, which was tasked with reviewing reports on agencies and entities reporting to General Assembly (such as Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, and the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church). We also spent a full day considering the Organization for Mission (essentially a governance document) for a newly unified agency of the denomination, Presbyterian Life and Witness (PL&W), which integrates and streamlines work previously carried out by two separate parts of the PCUSA structure- the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This unified structure is led by the Stated Clerk and Executive Director, the Rev. Jihyun Oh. We considered 30 amendments and engaged in lengthy discussion, ultimately recommending unanimously to the full assembly a revised organization for mission for PL&W. (The organization for mission was later approved by the full body as part of the consent agenda.) We had a number of complicated and fairly legally dense items to consider, made more complex by the significant feelings of hurt from the way in which the denomination's global mission work had shifted as a result of unifying these two agencies. Some mission co-workers (previously called missionaries) had their roles shifted or revised and other positions were eliminated (more info [here](#)) and there was extensive conversation both in my committee and on the plenary floor about ensuring accountability for these decisions and making changes to ensure there would be more clarity going forward.

Some Key Decisions Made by General Assembly

Ordination

We spent a lot of time talking about the requirements for ordination for ministers, seeking ways to be more flexible and collaborative. We voted to create a committee to develop recommendations for an approach to ordained ministry in which ministers serve together as part of ministry teams, supporting faithful ministry in congregations by drawing on their particular gifts to meet the evolving needs of the church. In addition, we created more flexibility to assess readiness for ordination, broadening beyond the historic system of ordination exams to allow for alternative means of “senior ordination portfolios” or a combination of ordination exams and senior ordination portfolio items. These portfolios can take different forms but allow candidates for ministry to demonstrate their grasp of the key theological and polity concepts necessary to serve as a minister and can be especially helpful to candidates who are neurodiverse or for whom English is not their first language. Presbyteries will create a way to evaluate these portfolios, ensuring that evaluation practices are consistent, transparent, and informed by anti-racism, intercultural competency, and equitable assessment principles.

Gender and Sexuality

After extensive debate, we voted to add an optional feature to the church’s form used when calling a pastor, allowing congregations to indicate their openness and readiness to call an LGBTQIA+ pastor. There was also a highly politicized resolution referencing polyamory that was referred to the PCUSA Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for discussion as part of a comprehensive theological framework that we voted to commission. (This framework will take the form of a document and study guide that will address the nature of relationships and human sexuality in contemporary contexts, including relationships in marriage and family, the church, the workplace, and society in general; questions of respect, accountability, mutuality, consent, dignity, fulfillment, and care; the dynamics of power in human relationships; and the full spectrum of relational and family structures. It will also draw on theological and biblical foundations; ethical considerations regarding power, discrimination, and misconduct; current findings from peer-reviewed research in medicine, biology, psychology, and related sciences; guidance for the use of inclusive and non-binary language; and recommendations for action regarding previous policies or documents that need to be updated or rescinded. This recommendation continues the work of the 223rd General Assembly, which approved “On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities.”) We also overwhelmingly voted to declare that the PC(USA) supports all individuals being able to access all medically necessary, evidence-based gender-affirming healthcare.

Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies

We passed via the consent agenda an item of business concerning further divestment from fossil fuel companies, directing the denominating to divest from companies whose primary business is based on the extraction, refinement, transport, or sale of fossil fuels, with the goal of fully completing this divestment by 2030 or as soon thereafter as prudent management allows.

Genocide in Palestine

We voted overwhelmingly, and without much debate, on language stating that the government of Israel has violated the international law prohibiting genocide in its war in Gaza. The resolution directs the PCUSA [Office of Public Witness](#) to advocate against U.S. military sales to and purchases from Israel, and encourages people to avoid products from Israeli companies linked to violations of international law, as well as condemns antisemitism and Islamophobia and affirms that criticism of the Israeli government is not inherently antisemitic.

AI

Commissioners and advisory delegates have a very lively debate about artificial intelligence (AI), ultimately approving a new social witness policy, “[The Algorithm and the Almighty: Navigating Artificial Intelligence Through a Reformed Lens](#),” an ethical framework for using AI, and creating an Advisory Committee on Technology and the Future as a permanent committee of the General Assembly to speak to and on behalf of the church on matters related to emerging technologies.

Christian Nationalism

There was a [robust conversation](#) at General Assembly about Christian Nationalism, especially in light of the nation’s 250th anniversary this year. We voted overwhelmingly to declare White Christian nationalism “a theological error.” Anytime the General Assembly votes to change the language of the Book of Order – essentially our Constitution– changes must go to the presbyteries (regional governance bodies) to be ratified. This resolution changes the text of the book of order, stating that we reject “any ideology that seeks to establish Christianity as a privileged or dominant force through the power of the state, or that conflates religious identity with national, racial, or ethnic supremacy” and will be voted on by the presbyteries before the 228th General Assembly. We also voted to urge congregations to “examine national symbols displayed on church property and in worship spaces, especially the U.S. flag, national and patriotic hymns sung in worship, presentation of colors in worship, and the propriety of national pride in relationship to the primacy of God in Christian worship.”

New Confession

A [special committee](#) had been formed by a previous General Assembly to write a confession, a statement of what we as a church believe. We voted to create a special committee to continue studying and revising the confession and report to the 228th General Assembly, which will meet in 2028.

Honoring Frances Taylor Gench

The Rev. Dr. Frances Taylor Gench, who many at NYAPC know and love, was [recognized with the Excellence in Theological Education award](#), a wonderful tribute to her four decades as a gifted seminary professor and groundbreaking New Testament scholar.

Election of New Moderators and 228th General Assembly

[Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero and Rev. Dr. Kristopher Schondelmeyer](#) were elected as the moderators of the General Assembly and will serve for the next two years and moderate the 228th General Assembly, which will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

It was a challenging and rewarding experience to engage in collective discernment about the future of our denomination through the online committees and the plenary in Milwaukee. I'll be sharing more about my experience and the decisions we made at General Assembly in a two-week Adult Christian Education series on October 18 and 25 at New York Avenue and welcome any questions in advance of that, or via email, at kristin.elisabeth.ford@gmail.com.

Serving as a Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the 227th PCUSA General Assembly

Sofia Turkman

My name is Sofia Turkman, and I was a Young Adult Advisory Delegate for the National Capital Presbytery at the 227th General Assembly this summer. This was my first time attending a General Assembly, and I learned a lot during the process. I enjoyed it very much overall. I have attended Saint Mark Presbyterian Church in North Bethesda, MD since 2012. I grew up with a strong identity as a youth in the church. The PCUSA is all I have ever known. The theme of the General Assembly was "persevering toward wholeness", with the guiding scripture being Revelation Chapter 22 Verse 2 which says: "on either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." I feel this verse resonates a lot in our world today. In a broken and divided Earth, society, and sometimes even church, God calls us to be these leaves of healing as we show up as Christians in the world. The fruits of our labor and service to Christ in whatever form they may take have a restorative power.

Stepping out of my little Saint Mark and DC bubble in Milwaukee was shocking in both positive and challenging ways. I quickly made friends from various states across the US and discussed funny cultural differences and what our home churches were like. It was interesting meeting people who were part of enormous congregations, but also people from congregations smaller than mine. It was surprising to see differing realities under the same denomination.

Before arriving at GA, I thought that everyone in the PCUSA thought the same way and had similar experiences. I thought that being in this church body meant you agreed with everything it stood for. It was a reality check to see otherwise. I was surprised to encounter groups with whom I strongly disagreed with that were a part of the same church body as me. I then realized that I was actually viewing belonging to the greater church as a means to separate myself from the people I didn't agree with, rather than a place to encounter all of God's people. Rather than separation, General Assembly became an invitation to engage outside of my comfort zone in new ways. At an ecumenical worship service during GA, the Rev. Dr. Kevin Vandiver spoke about the Revelation theme verse in his sermon, which emphasized that the tree of life is also on *both* sides of the river, not just one correct side, breaching every form of human divide. God is working even in those people we may view as misguided, in ways we cannot always see. God does not call us to be the *same* in any way, or to agree on everything, but rather he calls us to be *one* in Christ Jesus. While some theological disagreements appeared unresolved at the end of GA, I have faith that young adults and other generations alike will persevere toward wholeness within our denomination. Seeing meaningful overtures such as those on the Climate & Environmental Justice committee pass was encouraging. GA was a meaningful experience for me and I look forward to continuing my involvement with NCP and GA in whatever capacity moving forward.

My Brief Thoughts and reflections on General Assembly 227

Rachel Landers Vaagenes, TE

Once every other year, Presbyterians conjure up a 500-headed bishop to make decisions about the life and work of the Presbyterian Church (USA). I was blessed to be one of the heads in Milwaukee this year. Together, commissioners met, discussed, debated, and voted. We were the hands and feet of the PCUSA, representing the 166 presbyteries and 1,019,003 members, along with partners from other countries and denominations. And (to continue with my body-parts metaphor) this call was not for the faint of heart. It was a 2-week long meeting, (first week fully virtual, with some sessions lasting over 8 hours!).

We were randomly placed into committees that had been formed based on the submitted overtures. I was selected for the Racial Justice Committee. The subject was weary and weighty, but the three-score delegates met our task with grace and gratitude. It was startling to see that the main thrust of the overtures before us were trying to deal with previous GA approved actions *that had gone nowhere or whose status is unknown*. What does it mean to pass a motion if it is never acted upon or completed? My proudest accomplishment: a motion to establish a centralized place where anyone can track progress on past GA motions ([RAC-05](#)). Presbyterians love a good chart!.

We worked, sang, prayed, and struggled to move this work forward. Even with best intentions at heart, it was difficult for those in the margins to feel supported and seen. Technological and social difficulties cropped up everywhere, and it was slow, patient work. But this group was not cynical or defensive. And (miraculously!) we made decisions and made friends.

Then we traveled to Milwaukee, a welcoming place (home to the [Bronze Fonz](#)), but also one touched with poverty and brokenness. The beer was local and good. The lake was great. We shared the Baird Conference Center with a Pokémon and Topps trading card convention, and the Fire Marshalls of Eastern Midwest. Local PCUSA churches welcomed us into worship services across the region.

The plenaries themselves were overwhelming. Over 1000 people gathered into a massive climate controlled (read: freezing) room, where delegates sat with their presbyteries while observers and support staff gathered in the rear. No peanuts or tree nuts allowed. Our delightful National Capital team was composed of four Ruling Elders, four Teaching Elders, a Young Adult Advisory Delegate, and a Student Advisory Delegate.

Day one was plagued with technical problems, but again, patience was key. The first real vote—a Consent Agenda omnibus motion with 64 overtures—came quickly, and, despite my preparation and reading in the nights before, I felt unprepared to put my “aye” on such a large sum of actions. This was the first of many times that I trusted the work of others because of the good experience I had had during committee work. I did not agree with everything included, nor was I deeply informed on most of them, but I trusted my siblings who had done the work over the previous week, and I trusted the Holy Spirit. I knew then what it was to be a part of a whole.

Some debates were long, other votes were over before you could say “point of order.” Things that would have been unheard of even a few years ago passed without much fuss. We voted to call the Israeli Government’s actions a genocide, and to divest from fossil fuels definitively by 2030. Christian Nationalism was declared a “theological error.”

Other debates were difficult but excellent, regardless of whether I agreed with the outcome: the discussion of AI (referred to a future GA); whether or not to explicitly label pastoral searches as LGBTQ+ welcoming (approved); and how to address the poorly handled restructuring of World Mission and silencing of mission co-workers (passed a [substitute motion to create a review commission](#)).

Some debates felt uncharitable and ungracious to me, especially (and unsurprisingly) concerning matters of sexuality. There were times when groans from the body sought to silence a comment, or applause erupted, despite rules against editorializing.

This bled out into the halls and the internet. A small but visible group of young delegates and observers under Presbyterians for the Kingdom (PotK), dressed formally and in somber tones, clashed with the rainbow-haired and tattooed queer and affirming YAADs in a manner reminiscent of the Jets and the Sharks. Older delegates were equally tempted to view others as existential threats. Insults were common, and not always theologically grounded in love.

I (being no hero but not wanting to fall into fear and hate), tried to connect with curiosity and listen to understand, and befriended one PotK family, with three young girls in tow. The first conversation was talking-point heavy (“polyamory,” “Biblical authority”), but I tried to respond honestly and openly, and eventually statements became questions. Over three days I talked with this family, played with their kids, and didn’t make fun of their clothes or their beliefs. (I’m saved by the Blood and anointed by the Spirit! What can these poor kids and their skirts and suits do to me?) In the end, through tears and a surprise hug, my new friend thanked me and said, “I’m going to tell my pastor about you, and about the things you said.”

The topics at General Assembly were weighty, and while I didn’t always agree with the decisions—and while the actions of one small protestant denomination may not move the needle very far on the global stage—it is important to be able to move forward together. Some of these decisions will greatly affect congregations, and some will never even make a ripple in the local pew. But I think that the PCUSA should resist seeing victory in a vote at the expense of a relationship. How we get there matters. I was grateful for the trust, vulnerability, and mutual forbearance present in the NCP delegation. I do believe that God was in our midst, in the frustration and the joy. And only now, after GA’s conclusion, do I feel truly qualified to serve. But I was proud to serve as a representative of my presbytery and my denomination, and I thank you all for the opportunity.